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Glimpses Into the Year 2100 — 50 years after the revoution

Along the year 2007

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Daily life in the libertarian communist society

Introduction

The “glimpses” are a way to make the world commune of communities of the libertarian communist society less abstract... It is based on the big experiment of kibbutzes — the communes movements of Palestine-Israel of about 94 years, my following it since age 7, and living within it age 16 to 32. Nearly non of the members of the kibbutzes were libertarian communists... Most of them were first of all naZionists of various trends, But, till it started to deteriorate, the internal relations among the members were libertarian communists and the decision making was mainly direct democracy. (At the present, most of the kibbutzes are in the process of privatization.)

Just a day

Ri got his morning beeper signal in his ear. As a fast riser, he just enjoyed the melody for a short while before turning it off. Quietly, so as not to wake up his mate Ti, he paid a short visit to the service room, put on his clothes and walked towards the community centre.

It was still the grey light of dawn on the third DD (Direct democracy) day of Spring. Partly because it was a bit cold, partly by way of morning gymnastics, Ri walked fast — nearly running the few minutes till he arrived at the entrance to the dining facility.

He was delegated to a season of auxiliary work at that facility, and this DD morning, it was his turn to ensure the system was ready for the new day. He checked the temperature of the various drinks and porridges, and took from the cold room the vegetables, fruit and various salads for the breakfast diners.

Then he poured himself his morning mug of tea, took a nice slice of the cake he so liked and sat down at the early risers table.

He had just sipped the first few drops of his tea when Dana sat down at the other side of the table — giving him the warm, intimate smile that was so common between the near-sisters and brothers of the same age group that had grown up together. Dana was mandated this year to the work organizer team, and it was her turn today to ensure all the essential tasks were taken care of — either to call replacements for people who were sick and could not tend to their tasks, or for emergency tasks in the community or the district that could not be put off.

Just before Ri finished his last sip of tea, a noisy group entered. They were people destined for a community in the countryside that needed help picking vegetables, as the warm weather had caused a lot of tomatoes to ripen too early.

Ri's usual work at the facility was to prepare the products for the “chef” responsible for the special foods for people with specific needs — part of it for people who used the dining facility, part of it for people who were taken care of elsewhere: the seniors' facility, the local clinic, or just people who were too sick to come to the dining facility.

While he was busy working away, Gal, who helped the “chef” who did the regular dishes, came in to start his shift, and asked him how the educational committee had been yesterday. They were both on it but he had missed it because of some family happening.

Breakfast time passed, as did the preparations for the midday meal and Ri finished his work tasks for the day and went home to sit near the communication facility. There, he was joined by his mate and together they browsed the texts that were relevant to the evening meeting of grassroots community members.

Together they went to the midday dining facility to eat and chat with friends

and together they returned home. As Ri had missed out on his sweet morning sleep and, consequently, on some of the intimacy they should have shared during the week, they decided to dedicate the afternoon to mutual indulgence. . .

DD-day tea time was the usual kind of family meeting. Accompanied by their two siblings, today was their turn to visit Ti's parents. Also present were some of Ti's other family members, including her brother and his family, who were from a far-off community — on the other side of the city.

All together, they went to the dining facility to enjoy the family "reunion" some more. After the meal, they went each their own way — the kids to their age-mates, the grown-ups to their various recreations, and Ri returned to the communication corner in his home, browsing the texts of the district assembly delegates. This year he was the delegate to the district assembly which grouped members of each of the 200 grassroots communities in the district. In the chat room of the district educational committee, he chatted with some of the other members about the decisions the committee had proposed for the DD-day assemblies of grassroots communities in the district.

The proposals were about some changes to the district educational system. After long discussions in the educational committee and approval by the district assembly, it was decided to bring to the grassroots communities themselves the suggestion to try to get more involvement from the older kids in the education of the younger ones. In fact, it was some of these older kids, who were involved in an informal aid project with the younger ones, who had originally made the proposal. It was proposed that the changes be systematically assessed and, if successful and satisfying, the changes would be put to the assembly of delegates of the whole city.

After the evening meal in the community dining hall, the members of the community started to converge on the DD-day general meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting, chaired by one of members of the interpersonal relations committee, various committee members and individual members proposed subjects for discussion and decision. The first round was on the subjects to be included and the ones to be put to further discussion by the specific committees or at the end of the list, to be deferred to the next meeting if the time allocated to the assembly was insufficient. As usual, the final agenda was agreed without anyone calling to vote on specific items, and deliberations on the various items began. First, the proposals from the various committees that no-one in the committees had objected to were put to a formal vote. Then, proposals involving some minor disagreements or requests for change were put up for discussion and vote — some involved changes in the efforts to reach a consensus, others were decided on by an overwhelming majority, and one was decided by a marginal majority, at which stage the assembly decided to send it back to the specific committee in order to seek consensus in some way.

As the more pressing subjects were cleared quickly, there was plenty of time for the last matter. Ri was invited to report on the discussions and proposals for a decision of the district assembly. Most of the items were rapidly approved, but a proposal from the educational committee of the district committee brought about heated polemics. As time passed and it started to get late, one of the more involved proposed to defer decision and if there were no clear majority of support for the decision among other grassroots communities in the district, to continue the discussion at the next DD meeting.

The end of the year festival days

Ri got up slowly. No need to hurry today — the first of the five end-of-year days. After getting up and visiting the dining hall with his mate, Ti, and their youngest girl (aged 5) Di, they sat in the communication corner and opened the family statistics.

First, they looked at their energy consumption records. Last year, they had reached their limit a few decimers before the end of the year (the decimer, or 10-day period, replaced the old 7-day week) as a result of Ti's hobby of scooter driving. But as the rest of the grassroots community was far from reaching its limit, the requests of Ti and a few others for an increase in their energy consumption quota had been approved. This year, they were just a bit below the family quota limit.

After that, together with Di, they looked through her statistics for the year. They were glad to see that she hadn't gone over the limit for any of the sections — clothes, foods, sweets, toys, etc. Indeed, they noticed that her use of luxuries fell far short of her quota, so they discussed the various options and, in the end, Di decided that she would spend what remained of her quota on a trip to the far-off mountains with her five fellow affinity group members. (The basic educational unit and the new living-space units were arranged in such a way as to accommodate six new births per year.

Babies were usually born at the end of spring, so expectant parents moved to new living-space units after the autumn, after pregnancies had passed their initial medical checks. The new design of these living-space units better suited both the privacy of each child and couple, and also enabled 24-hour care for the children, who had their own affinity group space until they grew up and joined the company of the older children.)

Then, they went to the sports centre where they played a few games of table tennis with various partners. In their teens, Ti and Ri had been enthusiastic table tennis players and had participated in many district and all-city tournaments. They had got to know each other better and after a while moved in together into Ti's community. Now it seemed that Di was intending to follow in their footsteps, though it was still a bit too early to conclude that it was the sport she loved best.

Like on the other special days, Di did not return to her living space to eat with her own group and instead accompanied her parents to have dinner at the dining hall. After the meal, they returned to the group living space for their midday nap.

When they got up, the screen on their com unit was flashing. On approaching it, they saw the latest news: the need for the commune factory's products (special medical supplies) had dropped due to some innovation in hospital procedures. This meant the grassroots community assembly would have to find an alternative for a significant part of the work they contributed to the society that lay outside their community.

The members of the workplace production committee were urged to start studying some alternatives before the next meeting of the committee, so they would be able to prepare it in time for preliminary discussion at the coming DD assembly.

The main alternatives given were: first, to increase production of other items or new items by the commune's old factory. Second, just increase the number of work shifts of community members in other community, district or city workplaces. And third, build a new production facility to replace the old one, which would need a commitment by members to take on a long-term mandate to work there, as it would require a significant period of training.

Ri and Ti, who were among the commune members who contributed a significant amount of their work shifts quota to the old factory, discussed the subject at length.

Ti tended towards the third option. Ri, who had been involved over the last few years with the community's educational committee and recently with the district committee, raised the possibility of his wanting to train to become an educator in the district educational system. Over the years he had been ambivalent about the subject. His mother was a well-known educator and still worked in this capacity. As a child and teenager it had seemed to him that an educational mandate made people too serious and was not compatible with his involvement in light music. However, he was very relaxed with youngsters, and the education committee suggested time and again that he become an educator. Once, in spite of his reluctance, the subject was even brought up at a DD community assembly discussion, but the community accepted his refusal of the mandate.

After a while Di joined them for late-afternoon tea and cookies and both had a nice surprise when Di's big brother Ted joined them. Excitedly, he told them about the small theatre show his affinity group had prepared for the community festival and the possibility that it would be chosen for the district festival the next day.

The community's announcement system started to play the evening festival theme music that had been adopted just after the revolution in 2050. The music was a kind of a magical march for them and it accompanied them and all the members of the community to the dining hall. Among the walkers were some wheelchairs with the old folks who were too frail to walk. Most of them, as well as some of the "younger" veterans who were proudly walking, wore the honorary hat of that was given to participants in the uprising that had sparked off the revolution.

The tables were arranged around a small stage and waiting for them was the traditional meal of the poor wage-slaves in the harsh years that had preceded the revolution.

After the meal, one by one, small theatrical groups presented short sketches on life before the revolution and during the next 50 years. Then the tables and chairs were cleared away and the hall turned into a dance hall with local

musicians taking turns on stage, playing old and new tunes while people danced the night away.

When Di was too sleepy to stay any longer, Ti and Ri left Ted with friends and returned to the dwelling area to put Di to bed. Having said goodnight, they ensured that one of the other parents in the dwelling area would stay there, awake, to look after the children and returned to the dance.

The best-kept secret about the revolution just revealed

Ri got up a bit earlier than usual on the second day of the 5-day end-of-year festival. He had an important schedule because of his mandate as member of the district assembly of delegates. The first thing was a meeting of the educational committee. The meeting was hosted by a neighbouring community.

During the morning, they edited the final draft of their yearly report to the assembly of delegates. Immediately after the midday meal they shared at the host community's dining room, they joined the other members of the district assembly for the accountability meeting. Though the draft reports of all the committees were already available on the communication system, there was a non-redundant discussion at the assembly as nearly all committees were proposing some points to deliberate and to put on the agendas of the district grassroots communities for decision.

The main point raised by the educational committee was to intensify the relations and visits of the older teens with the various city polytechnics so the passage to higher education would be smoother. The idea had been discussed the previous year by the city educational committee and a few district educational committees had accepted the challenge to be the testing ground, if approved by their district and grassroots communities. The decision finally arrived at was that the new approach would be approved by the district grassroots communities, and a special programme would be developed for the two higher age-groups of the district's high school.

When the district assembly finally ended, they had a surprise waiting for them: they were invited to the 80th birthday party of Gil, a veteran of the city spokespersons at the time of the uprising that eventually became the 2050 revolution. He was a member of one of the grassroots communities of the district and had even participated a few times as guest at the district committee. However, throughout the years he participated as a welcomed non-delegate at meetings of the city and district assemblies committees, though he refused to be formally delegated to any of them.

It was a mystery all those years why he refused to be delegated to the district or city or any higher-level assembly of delegates. Though he was not a delegate to any inter-city assembly of delegates he was twice proposed as a special delegate to the world assembly of delegates, but even then he declined the offer.

Rumour was he might use this birthday party to reveal the reasons for his strange reluctance to be delegated. And indeed, when the party was drawing

to an end Gil called for a moment of quiet, and started to speak:

“You all know that before the revolution I was a member of this country’s specific anarchist federation for years. In the spokespersons’ assembly of the mass uprising of 2049, I was often delegated by my district collective to the spokespersons’ meetings of the coordination committees of various social struggle movements. The day when events in our city proved to be the turning point in the revolution has been written about in the history of the revolution. There was even a movie about the critical hours preceding the explosion of the bridge that prevented the last efforts of the State forces who were trying to disperse the spokespersons and suppress the uprising. The movie, and all the other texts about these crucial moments, vividly describe the moment when I put forward a motion calling for a vote whether to continue the discussions and polemics or to block the State forces from entering the city. Some ‘consensus people’ objected to any vote as long as there was strong objection from the Leninist left and other reformists and the chairperson, who was also the head of his party’s central committee, just refused to put the motion to order to the vote.

And, of course, you all know that I and a few other comrades forced him out of the chair. I replaced him and put the call for a motion to order to the vote. The overwhelming majority supported it and discussions at that point ended. Immediately afterwards the usual two speakers in support and two against made their cases briefly, followed by the vote on the decision to block the State forces from entering the city. There was overwhelming support for blowing up all the bridges leading to the city, and this was immediately implemented. It was the point when the 2049 uprising turned into the full-blown 2050 revolution. . .

But what you do not know, and what was never revealed, is that I did it on my own initiative — without any collective decision or deliberations. . . Because of this — and not as a form of self-punishment or guilt-cleansing, but as a precaution against any repetition of power-taking by me, on my own initiative — I refused, from that moment on, any mandate for any post involving decisions about other people — not even a specific mandate, if included the tiniest amount of power or authority.”

Making his way home after the party, Ri could see how fast these sensational revelations were spreading over the information system — first the district one, then the city system, quickly reaching the news headlines of the world main language feeds.

As he entered their dwelling unit Ti, who was still up despite the late hour, excitedly shared the sensational news with him. . .

The sad story of Ted's, affinity group member

Ron had been Ted's [Ti and Ri son] best friend for many years. They grew up together in the same dwelling space for newborn babies. They later spent many years together in the same recreation troupe which integrated drama with experimental music. They put on shows in various districts of the city and even travelled together with their troupe to neighbouring cities.

Ron had completed his basic education a few months before the others of his age group and had decided to travel to the other side of the continent. He had no problem with resources as the previous year he had contributed many hours of work above his quota, tutoring children interested in experimental music. So he gave a nice party for his closest friends and announced his intention to travel for the six whole months he had "gained" by finishing his basic education earlier than schedule.

It was a cheerful, noisy party with nearly all the participants celebrating their first age-group member completing his basic education. Only one of the guests was quiet and a bit sad — Nora, his girlfriend, who had been sharing a dwelling space with him for the past year.

It seems they had had quite an argument when Nora had asked Ron to wait until she too had finished her formal education, which wouldn't be long anyway, so that she could join him on his travels. But Ron insisted on going straight away.

During his travels, he stayed in close contact with his friends and family and even more so with Nora. However, something snapped in the relationship between Nora and Ron and one day, in the middle of his trip, she told him she was moving from their joint dwelling to a new one in her grassroots community. A month later, she told him she was planning on moving to a common dwelling with an ex-boyfriend who she had known since the days when they shared a newborn dwelling space many years ago.

That same evening Ron made somewhat exaggerated use of mood-changers in a pub in the city where he was at that time, which naturally influenced his guest performance on the pub stage, so much so that people asked him to step down. Ron, who had a history of late emotional development, responded in a way which was far from acceptable, and even punched the pub's entertainment organizer.

As Ron did not seem sober, the two pub organizers on duty called the city detox team and while they were waiting needed to use some mild physical force in order to restrain him. The team took him to the hospital and a detox nurse

joined him in the emergency detox room.

The next morning, Ron seemed sober, full of regrets and apologies. After breakfast he passed a thorough medical check and by noon was cleared and considered sober enough to be assessed by the team of the district interpersonal committee which had been called immediately after the midday meal. (Usually, in similar cases of breaches of interpersonal protocol, the interpersonal committee of the person's home grassroots community was called in. However, as Ron was from a far-away district and the possibility of evicting him being an option, the district committee was called instead.)

In Ron case, assessment was short. Communication with the on-duty interpersonal committee member from Ron's community revealed this was his first offence since childhood. So, after the team heard the description of the aggressive actions and Ron's explanation and apologies, it was decided — with Ron's consent — that he would return home immediately for further treatment in his community. It was also agreed with him that until such times as his own grassroots community had given him the all-clear, Ron would have no access to any mood-changing material. The shortest and fastest route home was charted and Ron got a priority pass.

It took Ron five unhappy days to get home, but when he finally did, he immediately met with the interpersonal committee of the grassroots community to decide on what was to be done. The first joint decision was to extend the ban on mood changers for forty decimers. It was also decided that Ron would join an intensive emotional growth group and, at the end of that period, return to the committee for further discussion.

It was also agreed with Ron that Nora's grassroots community would be out of bounds for him until decided otherwise, and that any communication between him and Nora would be possible only if she initiated it. They agreed, too, that an announcement about the incident and the decisions reached would be put into the relevant sections of the district communication system.

Later, in discussion with his art troupe and other close friends, Ron said he would dedicate the time remaining until the end of the season to intensive emotional growth and would afterwards enrol in the city's higher educational programme for experimental music.

Mandating Day

The third day of the end-of-year festival was dedicated as usual to the general rotation of mandating grassroots communities committees. As most members were mandated to committees, it was found long long ago that it was better to do the main rotation of all committees in one short period.

The main task of the Mandating Committee during the decimers preceding the festival was the reallocation of members to committees. The general guideline was that two thirds of the members of each committee (in other words, half the members of the community) would be reallocated during the general rotation from one committee to another. (The other third will continue to serve in it one additional year.) The Mandating Committee dedicated a significant part of the preceding meetings to discussing with people their assignments for the coming year.

The suggestions of the Mandating Committee were already available on the communication system for the whole decimer preceding the festival, together with the reservations of members wishing not to be mandated to a specific committee or the rare cases of people objecting to the mandating of a specific person to a specific committee.

Ri and Ti got up together and went to the dining hall partition of the community's main hall. After breakfast, Ti went to the very old members' dwelling space for her shift carrying out essential duties that needed doing even on minimal work days (when main production was halted and only essential services covered). Ri went to the hall where all the members not on essential work shifts were assembling.

The first subject was the membership of the Mandating Committee. One of the candidates asked the assembly not to mandate her to it as she had completed a two-year stint on this demanding committee just 4 years ago. She promised though to make herself available to the committee on demand. However, as she was such a talented organizer, the assembly convinced her to change her mind and arrived at a compromise — she would only be given a one-year mandate.

The vote at the end of the discussion completed the first point.

The second subject was the membership of the Interpersonal Committee. Its task was to deal with conflicts between members who were unable to resolve them in a non-formal way, and also to deal with infringements of members of the community on modes of interpersonal relations accepted by the grassroots community, even in cases where there was no complaint by the “injured” party in question. This committee was one of two committees whose members were rotated every year with one third continuing into a second year as non-mandated (and therefore non-voting) members.

The third committee was the Workplace Committee. This was one of the

busiest and thus the biggest. Its main task was to regulate the daily work within the grassroots community, the work of community members in district and city workplaces and the training of members for future work in tasks that needed special training. Some tasks, in fact, involved a great deal of investment in training, like special engineering, flying passenger planes, medical tasks, etc. and often they had too many candidates...or too few. Some tasks needed special personal characteristics while others required a large amount of preparatory work before candidates were brought to the community assembly for mandating.

That committee's least pleasant task was the daily emergency assignment of replacements for people who could not start their shift or had to finish it abruptly. No-one liked to change from a day of leisure to a day of work. No-one liked to disrupt someone's dreams or schedule — even if it just meant changing from one workplace to another. This task was usually rotated between the committee members who were on their second year of duty, or who had done it during their previous years of duty.

There was also a sub-committee, which was responsible for the periodic changes of workplace mandates for tasks that no-one volunteered for. The simplest placement was for essential tasks at the end of the decimer or for the dining hall. One task that was a bit more complicated was allocating members to district or city tasks that no-one had volunteered for. This could be taking care of the sewage system, specific work tasks in the production system or even work in the health systems.

The Workplace Committee's most serious task was to facilitate the first work mandates of the younger generation and changes to long-term work mandates.

There was also a special sub-committee involved with mandates for tasks that needed long training.

Usually, the Workplace Committee member on day duty had the mandate to assign people to work only for emergency assignments, and the decision could be subject to contest within an hour before the relevant sub-committee members, or at the DD-day meeting of the community at the end of the decimer.

All long-term mandates, whether for a few decimers or for life, had to be approved by the grassroots community assembly.

The fourth committee on the agenda was the Production Committee. Its task was to manage the technical aspects of the various community services, and production units. It was also the go-between for the various workplaces and the community assembly. This committee was mainly responsible for deliberations about the upgrading of equipment or changes to the allocation of labour to the various workplaces, and preparing suggestions regarding them for the general assembly.

Next was the turn of the Accounting Committee. In a way, this committee was responsible for enacting the anarchist communist principle “from each according to ability, to each according to need”. It monitored the allocation of work and products for communal consumption: education, food, healthcare, infrastructure and all other allocations according to need. It also monitored both what the grassroots community gave to and what it received from the world society. It monitored the contribution of work by members according to ability. It monitored also the allocation of resources to members both according to need and according to other criteria. Some products and services were allocated according to a rationing system (like energy and water), while others labeled “luxuries” were allocated according to personal general quota of values

to choose within it the wished for items (For instance, a person could chose within that quota furnitures, clothes, chocolate, electronic gadgets, etc.)

The sixth committee on the agenda was the Education Committee, that Ri was mandated to for a second term. The committee was mainly responsible for the education of the new generation, from birth to mature adulthood — even when they were educated by district or city facilities.

Following this, the assembly had a midday break for lunch and a nap, and afterwards continued at an afternoon session.

Ti and few others were absent from that session due to a work shift on minimal tasks that could not be delayed. It was for precisely this reason that the proposals for delegates to the committees were previously published on the communication system. The whole system of committees would be brought up again for vote at the end of the day. Ri therefore took a turn in caring for the kids in their dwelling space that afternoon — Di and the other five members of her affiliation age-group.

At the afternoon session, first on the agenda was the Recreation and Art Committee where it was proposed that Ti be mandated for the coming year. Its main tasks were to organize the local artwork supplied by community members to the community for celebrations and during daily recreation, and also to stimulate and promote the artistic talents of young and old members of the community.

And so the session went on discussing and voting on the rest of the committees.

The Hobbies Committee, that organized groups and public equipment for leisure activities.

The Healthcare Committee, that took care of monitoring members' health, facilitating the health services they needed, as a kind of go-between for them and the suppliers of health services within the community and in the district or city health systems.

The Healthcare Committee had special responsibility for taking care of the health of the new generation and adults who were unable to take proper care of themselves. When persuasion was not enough, minimal power could be applied in procedures previously approved by the grassroots community, though the person in question, or others, could contest it before the general assembly at the end of the decimer, or within an hour before the specific sub-committee of the district. In any new case where there was the prospect of restricting someone's freedom, it would be brought within an hour before the relevant district health sub-committee, and before the next community general assembly. For instance, if a person's mental system were malfunctioning to a degree that it represented a danger to the health or even life of this person or others, the Healthcare Committee member(s) available would summon the relevant people to restrict the person involved. In the case of a child or adult who usually have a carer, or another person looking after them, then the carer/s would be summoned, while in the case of those who needed emergency hospitalization, then the hospital team would be summoned.

The Housing Committee was responsible for allocating the available housing spaces according to preference and need and planning the improvement and building of housing spaces.

The Security Committee, which had been particularly important during the first years after the revolution, had by then lost most of its tasks. However,

it still had some functions. Its main responsibility was taking care of any case where malicious damage to the community system or members was suspected. Its mandate to restrict the freedom of a person was restricted to cases where imminent damage was suspected and only for a few minutes, until such times as the members of the district Security Committee were summoned.

Within 24 hours of any such restriction of freedom, there was to be an emergency meeting of the grassroots community. The assembly obviously had the power to put end to the restriction and the district Security Committee could contest this decision before the assembly of district delegates. If the assembly of district delegates decided to overrule the grassroots community decision, it was to be put to a vote in all the grassroots assemblies of the district. Anyone could contest the restriction of one's own or any other individual's freedom before both the district and the city assemblies of delegates.

The Environmental Committee was involved with both nature and dwelling environment. It also took care of monitoring, and if necessary, could bring before the community assembly any damage inflicted on the environment by the community system or its members.

Finally, there was the Communications Committee, which was responsible for the physical side of the communications system and for its content, which was to be available to all.

And so finished the second session.

After the evening meal, all the community members, except a few people who could not leave their duties, assembled for the final session.

The session began with a general discussion about the committees, the mandating circulation and the work of that year's Mandating Committee. At the end, there was a call for any members who objected to any of the mandates to come forward and put a motion. After a short while there was the final vote on the structure of the whole committee system for the coming year, and the members dispersed to engage in the recreation of their choice.

The district meeting

The fourth day of the end-of-year festival was dedicated to the district committees.

The members of the 25 district committees of the city were delegated during the general delegating round of the end-of-year festival. Though each community mandated its own delegate, preceding the mandating day there was a general voting in each district about the popularity of first term delegates — two thirds in each district assembly, and the higher half was usually delegated by their communities for a second year mandate.

Ri was among the third of members who were delegated to continue in their district committee for another term. After a short breakfast he cycled to the district centre's big auditorium. The day's schedule included the end-of-year accountability of the district committee sub-committees to the delegates, visitors and people of the district.

The reports had already been on the communication system for the last three decimers, so some points had already been discussed through the communication system. A few points had been discussed in the grassroots community DD assemblies, and several points had even been decided on in Ri's community and in others and had been submitted to the other communities of the district. Every grassroots community assembly could put a point on the agenda of the district committee and even call for discussion and vote on it in all the other of grassroots community assemblies in the district — both for the accountability session and for the regular DD sessions at the middle of each decimer. This was also true for any petition signed by 500 people in the district.

The district accountability meeting was attended by the new delegates to the committee, those who were continuing for a second term, the ex-delegates whose term had just ended, and other interested members of the district community.

Each sub-committee presented a brief summary of its reports, and the participants (delegates and others) had an opportunity to criticize or ask the sub-committee members for details that were not already available on the communication system.

The first accounting was of the Delegation Committee and immediately after that a provisional Delegation Committee was voted on, which would prepare the list of proposed delegating to sub-committees for the new year, to be decided on at the last session of the day.

Two “popular” matters of accountability always required more detail: conflicts dealt with by the interpersonal relations sub-committee between the district's grassroots communities, and conflicts between individual persons and grassroots communities which were not resolved by those directly involved.

As part of the tradition, all cases involving the expulsion of members from

communities were put to a vote at the meeting, whether to call for a vote within all communities or not. (Every member of a grassroots community whose community had decided to expel him could call for a district-level discussion and overrule by a general vote.)

All cases of limiting the freedom of people that had occurred in the district over the last year were also reviewed — whether very short ones of a few minutes or hours-long limitations of freedom due to acute mental disability or rare cases of acute anti-social behaviour that grassroots communities had failed to resolve without applying such power.

During that year, in fact, among the 100,000 people in the district there had been 17 cases of acute psychotic eruptions that needed the application of power by local and district medical teams. There had also been the cases of about 280 retarded or demented people whose free movements had to be restricted. There were 20 people whose anti-social behaviour was too damaging to be contained by their communities (some because of severe damage to the physical system, and a few who had attacked others — mostly when intoxicated, and were transferred to the city rehabilitation facility).

The emergency application of power to restrict the freedom of children above the age of 3 or of teenagers was usually made by the responsible adults around. In each case, the Educational Committee of the grassroots community was informed and, if necessary, an emergency meeting of the EC would be called. Every such case was brought to that decimer's community DD assembly.

New cases of restricting an adult's freedom for mental reasons were dealt with by the available members and immediately brought before an emergency meeting of the Interpersonal Committee and that decimer's community DD assembly.

In cases where adults' freedom was restricted as a result of acute anti-social behaviour, a prior decision by the grassroots community assembly and the approval of by the district interpersonal sub-committee was needed, unless it was an emergency. If it was an emergency, then the immediate approval by the community's Interpersonal Committee and that of the team in charge of the district interpersonal sub-committee was needed.

At the last session of the meeting day, the delegation of members of the district committee to the sub-committees (as suggested by the provisional delegation committee or by the rare suggestions of people present) were voted on.

At the end of the day, there was a vote on the list of the district committee's ten candidates for the city committee. The people on this list, and possibly some additional names suggested by other people from the district, would be voted on in the grassroots community assemblies. The 10 people with the highest votes (among those who also had the approval of the majority of the district community members) would be the district delegates to the city committee.

In the district, city, and higher-level assemblies of delegates, people who were in the minority in their communities or districts could join together and delegate their own delegates to the higher-level committees. Thus, every 400 people could have a delegate to the district committee, and in this city every 10,000 people could have their own delegate to the city assembly of delegates.

The origin of the dining halls

Revolutionaries anticipated fundamental changes in the future society. Some envisioned that instead of the nuclear family kitchen, there would be a public replacement. However, none of them imagined how fast the transformation would occur.

During the short period when the capitalist system was collapsing, people had to face very short supplies of both energy (electricity, fuel, etc.) and food. As a result, the small amount of food that was obtained was distributed and cooked/prepared in small neighborhood units.

When the food supply increased a bit, the creativity of the local cooks enabled people with special needs to be provided for and, using their special talents, make miracles with only basic materials.

Even after the supply of energy and food was largely restored, most people still preferred the communal system of food preparation, as they found it both more convenient and tastier. And it meant that they were thus able to use their energy quota for other things. So the dining halls were organized on a regular basis with some people delegated for expert tasks with other members of the grassroots communities that were formed, taking turns serving on other tasks.

The dining halls and society at large gradually turned vegan. The first step was even before the revolution, the result of the big chicken flu catastrophe that was also the immediate cause of the uprising that then turned into the revolution.

It had started in the winter of 2049. It seemed at first to be just another eruption of chicken flu that threatened to jump to humans. This strain of bird flu, however, turned out to be a ferocious killer when passed on to humans, even though the effect it had on its avian victims was often not fatal. The only effective measure to put an end to the catastrophe was the extermination of all poultry in the rural regions of the world as well as all other birds in zoos and anywhere else in proximity to humans (pigeons and parrots included). The 100 million people who had died by the time the harsh measures were finally enforced, and the scandalous way the plague was treated by the capitalist system were the immediate cause of the uprising.

The absence of chicken meat and eggs was one of the reasons the cooking of the communal dining halls became so popular. And the fast decline in the supply of other kinds of meat and milk were another reason the cooking of the experts was much more tasty and healthier than ordinary people could make in their private kitchens.

The diminishing supply of meat and milk were the result of the diminishing supply of oil. The increasing use of grains and other crops to produce a replacement for oil competed with food for farm animals and rising prices lowered the demand for it. . .

From the first days of its existence, the world commune of grassroots communities took emergency measures to coordinate the reduction of global warming (greenhouse gases) and the catastrophic storms and melting of the glaciers of the North and South Poles. It put an end to the wasteful use of energy in the meat industry and diminished the production of fertilizers to a minimum. The need to obtain compost from all organic food remains in order to replace fertilizers put an end to any community or private raising of vegetarian animals. Thus, though eating animals was never officially considered as an offence by any community, by 2100 it was just history.

Glimpse 8 — Last day of the end of year festival.

This was the last day of the End-of-Year Festival, dedicated to the higher levels of the world commune of grassroots communities direct democracy.

The morning meeting in the community multi-use main hall was devoted to the city level — a region that also included nearby small towns and villages intimately connected with it as their regional center. The main hall of the community was used for DD meetings, for cultural needs and for dining, and movable walls were used to partition the hall when it was needed for more than one purpose at the same time.

On the agenda for discussion were various issues about the major projects of the city, which still had not completed the transformation of the city's physical structure from the capitalist era to the libertarian communist one. There were still many of the housing estates that were common with the old way of the capitalist nuclear families. There were still lots of ugly, wide asphalt roads which needed some of their lanes transforming into gardens, instead of having to maintain them. And there were still remnants of industrial buildings to be transformed for new uses or be dismantled.

Some subjects that had previously been discussed by the community and other communities were brought as proposals of the city general assembly of delegates to decide on.

The afternoon session was dedicated to the problems and decisions of the higher levels — the region, the continent and the world commune. Some points were decided on to be presented to the district, for ratification. (And if ratified to be brought to the relevant assembly of delegates for further deliberations.)

(Every grassroots community assembly could put a subject on the agenda of its district assembly of delegates. Every district assembly of delegates could put a subject on the agenda of any higher level assembly of delegates.)

The evening session was dedicated to the discussion of city-level matters and for the delegating of 10 people to the city assembly from a list of 10 candidates proposed by the district assembly and 11 “independent” ones, who got enough endorsers (1,000) to be eligible to be voted on by all the district's grassroots communities. The ten who got the highest vote in the district's grassroots communities would be the district delegates at the city assembly of delegates.

In addition, every 10 thousand people from all the city's districts could endorse their own delegate to the city committee. Every delegate to the city and district could be recalled immediately if half of those who delegated him so decided. And in this way too could every other delegate in the multi-tier Direct

Democracy system be recalled.

So ended the 50th year of the revolution... and started the year of its celebration. For Ri and Ti, the year was a turning point as the medical equipment production unit they had worked in on most of their work shifts for the last 20 years was not going to be the same.

However, it was far from being an emergency. For the coming decimers, no significant changes were expected. Ri was still contributing most of his work shifts as helper to the dining hall chef, and Ti was continuing to work in the factory and starting to learn about the new medical equipment the new factory would produce. Formal discussion and decisions about the new factory and the delegation of workers to it would start at the DD assembly at the end of the decimer. However, it was clear from the texts on the communication system and from non-formal communications and discussions, that the community would decide on the building of the new factory and to delegate to it all those who had worked in the old factory, if they so wished.

At noon, Ti and Ri got a surprise. Though demands on the medical products factory were fast decreasing, there was an emergency request for a big supply. It was not so clear if it was because of faulty coordination on some level of the distribution system or because of a surge in demand due to some epidemic. Ti was asked to contribute another 4-hour shift in the afternoon and Ri was asked to contribute a shift at the factory after his shift in the dining hall ended. His period of work at the dining hall would not continue for a while.

Though not really exhausted after the double shift, Ri and Ti decided to defer their visit to Ri parents, whose grassroot community was practically on the other side of the city.

The next day, immediately after the noonday meal, Ti, Ri, Di and Ron walked to the trans-city transportation line that brought them near enough to Ri's parents commune to go by foot in good weather.

There, they had a nice get-together with the extended family, while Di and Ron could play with their cousins. In a rare mood of nostalgia, Ri's mother Ann and father Tom — who were students at that time — told the story of the uprising.

People were just getting over the horrors of the chicken flu epidemic which had killed about 400 people from amongst the students, faculty teaching staff and service workers. Without any warning, the stormy weather started. The electricity supply was not stable and the heating system was close to collapse. Though it was already early Spring, it was often too cold to concentrate and the Internet and computers were unreliable.

Ann and Tom, who had grown up in different neighbourhoods in the city, were not activists. Though they sometimes joined the other students in demonstrations against the bad handling of the epidemic by the authorities, they were certainly not dreaming of becoming “torch or flag bearers”. However, when they could no longer bury themselves in their studies, they were forced to join the others in the protests. Ann and Tom were in their first year at university. They were both enrolled in the faculty of Social Sciences, in the educational section. Ann was studying school psychology and Tom was studying the treatment of special needs pupils. They barely knew each other. The first time they talked was when they were involved in the same activity within the campus. Later, they were among the first to join the groups of students who were getting involved in the struggles in the city, and that was when they got to know each

other. When the authorities failed even to be seen to be doing their best to face the troubles, local neighbourhood meetings and initiatives to minimize the damages started to emerge. Ann and Tom were among those who brought that mode to the university. While telling the story, Ann and Tom seemed to become more and more wrapped up with the nostalgia. Their faces and voices expressed the various emotions as if they were still there — the anger, the excitement, the empathy, and the joy of taking their future into their own hands... They were both delegated by their classmates to the university activists assembly of delegates, and they were both delegated by that assembly to the city assembly of delegates. Soon they developed a permanent relationship that still held on Ann's 69th birthday.

Time passed quickly and the whole group went to the dining hall before the evening meal was over. The hall was nearly empty and Ri missed the people he had grown up with, and who he did not meet as often as he would have wished. After the evening meal they returned to Ann and Tom's place, but the magic of nostalgia had evaporated.

After a short chat Ri and his family returned to their community, taking turns in carrying Di, who was already half asleep.

The new medical equipment factory

During the whole decimer, there had been intensive traffic on the communication system about the local medical equipment factory — mainly on Ri's grassroots community section of the net, but also on that of the district production committee.

The overwhelming majority of the regular contributors of workshifts to the factory were for the option of building a new factory in place of the old one. They expressed their long-term commitment so the special training needed would not be a waste. The district production sub-committee members who collected the relevant information suggested that the new factory use some parts and machinery from the old factory. They also suggested that some members of neighbouring communities could enroll as regular workers in it. Some members of neighbouring communities who had in the past contributed workshifts to the old factory, sporadically, agreed too to become regulars, with a commitment for a long period.

Though it seemed a major subject, it was so easily resolved in the preliminary non-formal communication that had just been announced in the community assembly by the production committee, and got an unanimous vote for it from the assembly.

The remaining steps were supposed to be just a formality — ratifying the decision by the district assembly and the assemblies of all the district grassroots communities. Following this, there would be the mandating of the people who would be regularly contributing workshifts to the new factory, both in Ri's community and the neighbouring ones.

This project was a kind of hybrid as factories were usually either a part of the district system or part of a grassroots community. This time it was supposed to be mainly of one community (with the most flexible workshift allocation enabled by that), but also with regular workers from neighbouring communities. (As the factory needed more regular workers than any grassroots community can supply.)

The importance of such a workplace within a community was that it enabled in a very flexible way the inclusion of people with limited abilities among its workers.

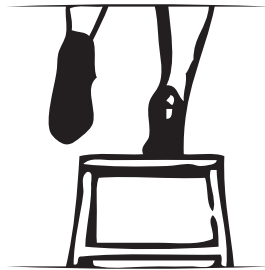
At the same assembly, there was a decision on the mandating of members who preferred not to be included among the regulars for the new factory to alternatives, including the shifting of Ri's mandate to the district educational system. He was supposed to start as tutor at the gymnasium — the “high

school” that the older kids in the community enrolled in together with the kids of neighbouring communities. It was decided that after he finished his term helping the chef of the dining hall, he would complete his training for that task.

As a related subject, the second item on the assembly agenda was the accountability of members of the community mandated to tasks within the district system. One especially sad item on this subject was the case of the recall of a community member who had for many years been delegated as a surgeon at the district hospital. There had lately been various complaints about his work, both professionally and in the interpersonal relations with both staff and patients. The community interpersonal and workplace committees had already discussed the complaints and possible ways to resolve the situation. Together with him, they arrived at the conclusion that the best step would be to reallocate his work shifts from the district hospital to the community health team. So after a short discussion at the assembly, his mandate at the district hospital was recalled and he was mandated to work as part of the community health team.

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